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## THIS YEAR'S PRAIRIE HARVEST.

By JESSIE M. E. SAXBY.

ANYTHING more beautiful, more inspiring almost, than the prairie-lands at harvest-time—in a year such as this has been—can scarcely be imagined. Far as eye can reach, spread the fields of yellow grain, swaying and rustling as the breeze flits over the full and ripened ears, bringing with it the perfume of a thousand wild-flowers and grasses which bloom on the virgin savannas. I thought that earth had never sent heavenward a sweeter incense than the breathings of Nature rising from those harvest-fields.

Canada North-west is jubilant over the golden grain which she has joyfully gathered into her barns. The rains have been plentiful this season, and have amply compensated for the comparative absence of snow during the winter. A scarcity of snow is a serious calamity to prairie farmers, the irrigation of their lands depending as much upon the winter snows as on the summer rains. Those prairies are a pitiful sight in a dry season—the ground all parched and gaping; the grain stunted and brown; the grass shrivelled to its roots; the fire-fiend triumphing over beneficent water-spirits; stock maddened and lost for lack of water; settlers depressed through the failure of their crops.

Folks who grumble over the dreariness of a white-robed earth through long cold months should remember betimes how much they owe to the kindly snows, which are really blessings in disguise!

The grain ripens very rapidly in the North-west, and is dropping from the ear almost when it is 'hardening'; therefore, harvest operations must be done in haste. The almost universal use of expensive machines for cutting and binding, &c., goes to prove that farming out West 'pays' on the whole; but when a very abundant harvest is to be garnered, there is always need of extra labourers; and farm-hands can always earn enormous wages during the autumn, particularly in Manitoba.

As I passed along, I saw two, or four, or even six oxen (or horses) yoked together, and dragging great machines along fields of standing grain; and as the mighty 'rigs' moved onward, strips of earth were shorn of their beauteous dress, which fell along the track in rows of sheaves, symmetrical in shape, uniform in size, neatly tied up, and laid in rigid order at equal distances from one another.

There was no apprehension this season of prairie fires, which wrought such devastation last year; but I heard a great deal about the frosts, and I saw some of their results—on a small scale. Judging by these, I fear 'a frost' widespread must be as bad as a fire. Fortunately, the frosts have been partial and limited, and though they have withered the hopes of a few individual farmers, as a whole the North-west has suffered very slightly from this cause. In many cases the evil might have been averted on the smaller farms, where the frost has been most felt.

'Canny' farmers, taught by experience, can tell when a frost-wind may be coming their way, and they prepare for it. They lay a row of 'smudges' along the wind-side of their fields of grain (a smudge is a little pile of dry grass, sticks, clods of earth, any rubbish, in fact, that will raise a smoke when lighted). The ice-wind stealing along to blight the field is met by the smoke, and compelled to carry its genial warmth to the grain in place of the deadly breath of 'a frost!' I saw a large field thus guarded. There had been a frost in the previous night, and the men had been alert keeping their smudges going with the most perfect success. Fresh piles of rubbish were lying ready if required; but fortunately the frost did not visit that locality again. Two miles farther on, a neighbouring field, left to itself, had suffered, and its owner was bewailing his hard fate.

No precautions can be taken against hail showers, and these are as destructive as the frost-winds, though more limited in their operations. One day a shower of those cruel crystals passed

over the spot I stood upon. I could hear the swish and rattle they made, could see the fierce sun-rays flash and scintillate among them. We were amazed that no particle of hail fell on us. The edge of a field of wheat half a mile beyond was 'visited' by a few hailstones from that shower—hailstones as large as gooseberries and wicked as bullets. Five miles across the prairie I saw (two days later) what that same shower had done to a crop which had promised glorious things before the visitation. The grain was lying broken and beaten to the sod; the potatoes and turnips were scattered over the earth, shorn of their green tops; some chickens were pelted to death; a garden over which much care had been expended was a dismal wilderness; the wooden walls of the house were marked by the hailstones as if a shower of partly 'spent' shot had been rained upon them. It was a sad scene; but my pity was lost in admiration of the manner in which the strong-souled farmer—a man without means beyond what came to him from the land he was cultivating—bore his loss and spoke of the future. Verily, the true North-wester is a Titan in mind as well as in body; and we are glad to know that for one man who may have suffered there are twenty who are rejoicing over well-stocked barns.

Strange to tell, a large proportion of the best grain this season was 'self-sown.' The crops last year were so bad that in many cases it was not worth while to reap, and the grain was left to drop where it stood. From the seed thus left grew some of the goodly crops of this year; and the North-west farmers have thus made the great discovery that the best crops are those raised from grain sown on stubble. A prairie philosopher explains the matter thus: 'When the ground is not ploughed or harrowed, the moisture of the autumn and winter remains undiminished; also the stubble holds its weight of snow, and this snow is a protection against the wind for the young grain coming up.'

Curiously enough, these self-sown fields were free from the plague of 'pig-weed,' which was spreading itself destructively in the adjacent fields. These fields had been ploughed, and the seed sown after the usual method. The philosopher explains that on ploughed land the weed starts with the same advantages as the grain, and being of faster growth, soon chokes out the legitimate crop. But on the stubble the wheat gets a fair start of its noxious rival, and is in possession of the field before the weed has pierced the surface of the earth. Thus the 'choking-out' is all on the right side when the grain is drilled into stubble or left to sow itself.

This pig-weed (a species of *Chenopodium*, or Goose-foot) is a great nuisance, and does not seem to be 'understood.' It grows very rapidly, and soon smothered up all other plants. There seems no way of getting rid of it except by pulling it up when it is very young. It strikes its roots deep and fast into the soil, and it grows to the height of four and five feet. When pressed and stored, it makes a nourishing 'green feed' for winter use; and the animals eat it greedily in that state. Not a single blade of pig-weed grows

on virgin soil, they told me; but no sooner is the earth turned over, no sooner does the edge of a farm implement furrow the sod, or a wheel break the turf by a 'trail,' than up springs the pig-weed.

Natural hay is abundant and of excellent quality this season; for the 'slews' had been under water for months, and the grass upon them was as soft and green as that of an English lawn. (A 'slew' is a slight depression in the ground where water accumulates, and I fancy the word is a corruption merely of 'slough.') In May, the young farmers were bathing in a slew, where in August they were driving their mower and team of oxen!

On the Indian Reserves the crops were as good as elsewhere. The 'straw' was not so tall; but the wheat and oats had 'headed' beautifully. Indeed, the Red Men's fields could bear comparison with those of the crofters, if not with those of the experienced Canadians.

I brought home from the island of Vancouver a head of oats which looks like a little sheaf, is over six feet tall, and is the product of one ear! I gathered it at random from a field where I saw the tops of men's hats bobbing about, and discovered that men were walking through the corn with those hats on their heads!

The harvest in Eastern Canada, we were told, has not been so good as that of the North-west; therefore, reports from the older provinces must not be understood to include the Dominion as a whole. A significant fact is that emigrants—chiefly of the farming class—from East Canada and from the States are pouring into the Far West-north-west. There is room enough and to spare; but what is better still, there is bread enough and to spare.

## THE LAST KING OF YEWLE.

### CHAPTER V.—THE NEW MASTER.

FOR the space of a minute a dead silence fell on all who were present at this startling and unaccountable discovery. Richard King was the first to move. He approached to the chair which had contained the dead master of Yewle, and narrowly scanned it and the immediate surroundings. He noticed that the chair had been turned a few inches towards the casement, and the half-smoked cigar which had been held in the dead man's fingers had been dropped on the floor. The casement next received his attention. It fastened by two bolts within, and could not have been opened from the outside except by breaking the thick plate-glass. It stood wide open now. After examining these things, Richard King, pale and stern, turned to the silent crowd until his eye rested on the butler. 'Who has had the key of this room since I was here yesterday?' he demanded.

'No person has had the key,' was the prompt answer. 'It has not been one second out of my possession.—Moreover, Mr Richard, you yourself were the last that asked to see the master.'

'Are you sure the casement was then fastened?'

'As sure as I am that it is now open, sir.'

'I can bear witness,' observed Francis Gray, 'that it was fastened at nine o'clock last night.'

Richard King turned to him sharply and, as several thought, suspiciously. 'How do you know that, Mr Gray?' he inquired.

'I was walking in front of the house,' answered Gray, dropping his voice, 'and yielded to the impulse to look in at my dead friend. The case—ment was quite secure, and—and the body was where you saw it, in that chair.'

'This is a most extraordinary occurrence,' said the coroner. 'Of course, if the body cannot be found, there can be no inquest.—What is to be done, Mr King?'

'The police must be sent for at once,' Richard King answered in a clear hard voice; 'there has been some foul-play here.—Hand the key of that door to me.'

'I don't know your right to demand it just yet, Mr Richard King,' replied the old butler with hot face.

'I am Mr Rowan King's nearest relative.'

'There's a nearer one than you, Mr Richard, though he is not here to-day. And I firmly believe, moreover, that Mr Rowan is as much alive this morning—wherever he is—as you are. He isn't the first of his family the thing has happened to.'

'Take your rubbishy story to the servants' hall,' said Richard King, losing his temper.

Now, it was the fact that every person present was aware of the peculiar fatality of the King family, and there was no doubt that the butler's declaration made an impression. There was just as little doubt that Richard King's loss of temper inspired an opinion not in his favour—an opinion that the ownership of Yewle was too near his grasp to be surrendered without a contest.

All the same no objection could be made to his resolution to bring the police on the ground. In an hour they were at Yewle and in full possession of all the facts. Stokes found a suitable opportunity of impressing his own view of the case upon the officers, which was, that if Mr Rowan was not discovered among the woods—which had been his favourite haunts—they might conclude he had gone off again on his wanderings, and would return to Yewle—Heaven knew when!

As Richard King instructed the officers according to his own view, a minute and exhaustive search was commenced, first in the house, next in the grounds, and gradually enlarging the circle of search until every inch of the park might be said to have been carefully inspected. The result was a perfect blank. Richard King was not satisfied yet that all that was necessary had been done. Wherever a spadeful of fresh earth appeared in the gardens or grounds, he caused the soil to be dug up; wherever there was a drop of water on the estate, in ditch, or stream, or pond, he had it minutely searched and dragged.

As this ghastly work went on, even the men employed upon it, liberally as they were paid, began to grumble and to give unmistakable signs to their employer that they were losing the 'stomach' for it. On seeing this, he tried another plan, which was nightly discussed in the *King's Arms* at the village with a freedom of rustic comment which Richard King would not have liked to hear. He gave the men spirits, and it began to be noticed that he fortified himself with frequent applications of the same stimulant. Lastly, he promised a liberal reward

to the first finder of the body of Mr Rowan King.

'It ain't o' no use,' said the spokesman of the party on a Saturday evening when they had received their wages. 'I, for one, Mr King, don't intend to go on this job o' Monday any further.'

The other men unanimously announced the same resolution.

'Very well, go,' answered Richard King. 'I can find others.'

They went; and after a preparatory bath and toilet, that improved his appearance, Richard King walked over to the vicarage.

Francis Gray was in London now, having lost no time in leaving Yewle when he found this new master unceremoniously take up his residence there; and King was a daily visitor at the vicarage. He was a little embarrassed in regard to the curate, to whom, on the strength of his expectations, he had some time ago promised the living; but, on the other hand, he saw how the obligation of fulfilling that promise would help him in his suit for Agnes King. Where could they remove to so fitly as to the Hall?

He was in ill humour this evening, on account of the conduct of the men, and it took some effort to clear his countenance before he entered the vicarage. With all his cleverness, and with all his solicitude to make himself acceptable in that house, he did not know how abhorrent to the ladies was the work which he was engaged upon. He was not long there when he referred to it. Mrs King had left the room; and turning to Agnes with a look of concern, he said: 'Another week gone and no result. I begin to be fairly astounded, Agnes. And the boors actually refused this evening to continue the work on Monday.'

A look of sickness came for a moment into the girl's face. She hesitated before she spoke. 'Mr King,' she said, 'has it not gone far enough? It is horrible to be digging and dragging like that day after day. Some day the mystery will be cleared up, and what will it all amount to? Merely the simple melancholy fact that Uncle Rowan is dead; and we know that already!'

'Yes; we know it, we know it,' he quickly answered; 'but you cannot see all that depends on—on finding the body—besides giving it a Christian burial.'

No; thank Heaven! the poor girl did not know, or dream.

'Would you abandon this horrible search—to make me grateful to you?' she pleaded, desperately—for the form of words was one she had much thought over, and shrunk from.

'To make you grateful, Agnes?' he answered softly. 'Ah yes—surely, surely!'

'Then you will abandon it?'

She was crimson to the eyes, but was resolute not to falter till she had his promise. He gave it at once; and Agnes was as conscious as he was that the bond was tightening. He went back to the Hall in good spirits that night, thinking less of the promise he had made than of the distance by which the girl was thereby drawn closer to him.

But that he felt himself bound by the promise only as far as the girl's observation extended was evident from his manner of spending the next

three hours. With a bottle and glass beside him, he sat in Rowan King's chair in the study, facing the casement, and marking out, in his thoughts, every path that could be taken from that spot and every place the paths might lead to. 'If his body is at the bottom of the sea, I will bring it up to the surface!'

He staggered up to his bedroom at two in the morning, and slept till the church bell across the park was ringing for service.

It became necessary now to take some steps with regard to the property, of which for so far Richard King was only presumptive owner. The family solicitor came to Yewle and held a private inquiry into the death of Rowan King. Richard King declared that there could be no doubt of his being dead—but Richard was, of course, an interested party. Dr Hayle, however, was certain Rowan King was dead; he had not examined him, he said, and was not in a position to speak as to the cause of death; but it was a lifeless body he saw in that chair. He had written to Francis Gray, and showed a letter from him bearing the same witness. The opinion of the old butler was disregarded by the man of business, who now declared that, on the evidence he had heard, he would proceed to have the late Mr King's will proved.

'Had he made a will?' asked Richard King, concealing his anxiety by walking across to a window and looking out.

'Yes; strangely enough, too, the will was made and executed on the very day of his death. It was posted to me that evening. The document is brief,' said the lawyer, unfolding a sheet of foolscap paper, 'and written in Mr King's own hand. It is witnessed by the butler Stokes, and a gardener named Wilson.'

Here the solicitor paused for a minute, looking over the document. Richard King did not turn from the window.

'The mansion of Yewle, with its furniture, pictures, plate, and heirlooms, his horses and carriages—and so on; everything, in fact, in and about the place—together with all his freehold estates, he bequeaths to you, Mr King.'

Richard King turned round slowly, looking as composed as though he had known all this before. 'Is there anything more, Mr Rintoul?'

'He bequeaths twenty thousand pounds or thereabouts, which lies to his credit in bank or is invested, to his niece Agnes King. That is all the will contains.'

'I am glad he has not forgotten his brother's wife and child,' said Richard quietly. 'Had he not provided for them, I should have considered it my duty to do so.'

The solicitor bowed, and there the interview terminated.

The necessary legal steps were taken; and, after the delay inevitable in a case so unusual, probate of the will was granted. Richard King was now undisputed master of Yewle; and the first effect of the fact was the giving of notice by Stokes the old butler. Instead of accepting the notice, the new master paid him a month's wages and allowed him to go.

The proverbial 'law's delay' caused some three months to elapse before the affairs of the late master of Yewle were fully wound up, for it was found that he had various sums of money invested

in foreign securities not readily realisable. However, Mr Rintoul, the solicitor, at length completed the 'schedule,' and invited Mr Richard King to call upon him. Before going up to London for this purpose he called on the ladies at the vicarage. 'I am going up to see the lawyer,' he said, 'who informs me that everything is wound up at last. As executor, I shall now have twenty thousand pounds to give to you, Agnes. How shall I place it for you?'

The girl no more knew what to do with so much money than if it had been a veritable white elephant; and her mother was not much wiser. After pointing out the various ways in which the money could be invested, Mr King at last said, with a smile: 'We had better let the matter stand over for the present, and talk it over at our leisure later on.'

But Agnes had a suggestion to make, which cost her a little embarrassment. 'Uncle Rowan always meant to provide for Francis Gray, and I would like him to share this money with me.'

'Your uncle Rowan must have had his reasons for what he has done, Agnes, and we are bound to respect them. He chose to give you the money, and you must take it. As for Francis Gray, whenever he wants a helping hand, I shall myself be ready to give it to him. Will that do?'

She did not urge the point further. Then there was a pause, and Richard King was gathering his forces for the real object of his visit to the vicarage.

'There is a matter,' he said to the ladies, speaking slowly, 'which can hardly be postponed any longer, and it is one which I have great difficulty in mentioning to you. You know that this living has been vacant for a long time, and I am being pressed to fill it.'

Mrs King looked startled now; but he raised his hand deprecatingly.

'Rowan King's sentiments in regard to this house are mine also. It is, and shall be, yours as long as you wish to stay in it. But I have ventured to hope,' he went on, with an appealing look to Agnes, 'that—that you would come to the Hall.'

Mrs King looked at her daughter too; and Agnes showed, by her changing colour and tightly clasped hands, that she was conscious the decision rested solely with her.

'Agnes,' he continued tenderly, 'you placed a condition on your consent, which I gladly accepted. But think, Agnes—should I work less earnestly to fulfil that condition if you were my wife? And it would be so much better and happier for all of us. And—pray do not misunderstand me for saying it, but all this is very near to my heart. When your father returns to us, Agnes, will he not be the happier for knowing that no cloud was permitted to rest on those dearest to him?'

The girl was in tears; but when, emboldened by her emotion—which of course he construed as consent—he moved nearer to take her hand, she quietly rose and stepped back a pace.

'Not now,' she said gently—'not now. Give me some time to think.'

'Assuredly,' he answered. 'I am far from wishing to press you, Agnes. But I may, I hope, take some steps now for filling the living? That will in no way interfere with your freedom



of deliberation; only I could not do so without reference to you.'

'Oh yes,' she replied, 'you may certainly do that.'

What more could man wish for? So Richard King thought as he walked exultingly away from the vicarage. Agnes was his now; her last words, giving him liberty to present another occupant to the vicarage, clearly implied her consent.

Why did he seek this girl—this felon's child—so eagerly? She was very beautiful indeed, and worth any man's seeking. Yet one or two persons, who knew Richard King well, would have sought for some other motive. He had two or three times lately been discussing with his steward the subject of repainting and decorating the Hall, and substituting modern carpets and furniture for some of the old things. There had not been a lady in the house for twenty years, and it needed preparation for a new mistress. Accordingly, before starting for London that morning, Richard King announced that a man would be down from town next day to prepare estimates for the renovation of the Hall forthwith, an announcement which it need hardly be said was discussed all over the parish before evening in connection with the master's approaching marriage with Agnes King. The topic was treated with very mixed feelings, which need not be entered into here.

Before starting for the railway station he took time to drop a line to the curate to tell him he might prepare for an early removal to the vicarage.

It was early afternoon when he arrived in London, and driving to an hotel in the neighbourhood of Pall-Mall, he found himself just in time for luncheon. He had made an appointment with the solicitor for three o'clock, and as it wanted an hour of that time he strolled round to a club near St James's Street to which he belonged, and went into the smoking-room. It was a very quiet and decorous-looking club in the daytime; but it was well known that at night high play went on in it and fortunes were wrecked almost every week. He had not been sitting five minutes when a florid and military-looking man, low of stature and unduly fat, came into the room, looked at King, stopped a moment, and approached him. 'King, how are you?' he said in a loud cheery voice.

'Oh, is that you, Saverley?' said King. 'All right, I hope?'

'Not so well as I would wish, King,' answered the other, taking the next chair and speaking in a lower key. 'That's a confounded affair about "Influenza," isn't it? I see you know about it,' he added, pointing to the evening paper in King's hand. The truth was, however, that Richard King had not yet read a word of the newspaper.

'No; what's the matter?'

'Matter? The horse didn't even get a place to-day. In all my experience I have never been hit so hard.'

The truth began now to dawn on Richard King, and his face darkened. Ten days before, he had been in London; and in this very room, after dinner, he had backed that horse heavily—indeed, recklessly, as a man who has been drinking too much will do. He scarcely remembered it next morning, and had given no thought to the matter since.

'I think you booked those bets for me, Saverley?'

'I did; and if I hadn't stopped when I did, you'd have been let in for double the amount. As it is, King, it is a large item even for a rich man like you. You have lost eleven thousand odd.'

Richard King turned pale. 'I was tipsy,' he said, 'when I made these bets!'

'Sh-h-h!' replied Saverley, raising his hand; 'don't let anybody hear you use such words. No; you were not tipsy, King; I wouldn't have allowed you to back a horse if you were; but you were bad enough afterwards. You'd have gone to the cards and lost your estate if I hadn't bundled you into a cab and taken you to your hotel.'

A foolish, tipsy vanity to be regarded as a rich man had brought him to this! It was a terrible blow to begin with; but when he had some brandy-and-soda with Major Saverley, and heard of the men who were irretrievably ruined over the same horse, it comforted him to reflect that he was in a position at least to 'settle.' He was even able to laugh at the matter with his friend.

Then there was a 'plunger' who had just joined the club, and was a rich treat for the birds of prey. To the accounts of this young man's reckless dissipation of his inheritance King listened with a good deal of interest.

'If you were only less socially inclined after dinner, now,' said the Major confidentially, 'you could, being a comparative stranger from the country, have good fun out of the chap. He always comes early, before the others gather in.'

Richard King knew what this meant, and obtained a sufficient description of the plunger to enable him to identify him.

'I'll try what I can do with him this evening,' he said. 'I must be off to keep an appointment with my lawyer now; but I shall dine here.—Are you engaged?'

'Unfortunately, I am; but I will look in about eleven o'clock. You can do a good thing with the plunger if you are careful—perhaps,' he added, 'recoup your loss on Influenza—who knows? Only, my dear fellow, keep your head clear while you are in these premises.'

It was good advice; but, as Richard King thought, unnecessary; of course he would keep his head clear. If he were able to pluck this young fool to anything like the extent hinted at by Saverley, he should not be under the necessity of paying his debts with Agnes King's money; for there was no other way of doing it.

He made the interview with Mr Rintoul as brief as possible; and calling at his banker's to pay in the cheque for Agnes King's inheritance, he at the same time drew out a sufficient sum for the evening's work.

'I must lose a few hundreds at first, to draw him on,' he reflected. 'Eleven thousand! I'll never back a horse again while I live.'

After dining at the club, King, with flushed face and somewhat doubtful gait, proceeded up-stairs to the billiard room. There were card tables round the walls, and one in the recess of a bay-window. The room was unoccupied, except by a young man of vacuous expres-

sion and very dissipated look, who wore a good deal of jewellery. King at once recognised him by Saverley's description, and was able to perceive that, like himself, the young man had been drinking. He smiled at the reflection that his own steadier head gave him the advantage.

'Shall we have a bottle of wine?' suggested King, when, after a few minutes' conversation, they sat down in the recess to 'while away an hour' at cards. The other willingly assented; and then commenced the night's work, the full results of which Richard King did not realise till next morning.

(To be continued.)

### GOLD IN THE ARTS.

FROM an historical and political point of view, gold is perhaps the most interesting of all the metals. Since the earliest ages, mankind has had an instinctive attraction for it. Some years ago a celebrated Professor admitted three little children, who could only just walk, into a room where there was a gold ball and a silver ball, each exactly of the same size, upon the floor. They all instinctively stretched out their little hands towards the gold ball, and did not appear to take the slightest notice of the other.

'Its peculiar properties and its scarcity have rendered gold more valuable than any other metal,' says Dr Thomas Thomson. But gold is only valuable on account of its comparative rarity and some of its properties, which are exceedingly remarkable, such as its inalterability when kept exposed to the air, its ductility, and its malleability. In other respects it is far less valuable than iron, which, if we except aluminium, is the most common metal of the earth's strata.

The attempts of the alchemists to convert other metals into gold form an interesting and not altogether unimportant period in the history of the development of science. This period extends more or less over twelve centuries, and though modern chemistry has since been established on a firm basis, there still exist here and there in Europe a few persons who propagate the ideas of the alchemists, and believe that it is not only possible to transmute metals, but that as chemical science progresses so will medical knowledge. But the moderns who speculate upon these medieval ideas do so upon the strength of certain curious and hitherto unexplained chemical phenomena, and appear to have totally abandoned the notion of a *lapis philosophorum* endowed with the property of transmuting metals and prolonging life.

It is astonishing how little attention is paid in general to this extremely remarkable metal, and how few persons reflect upon the peculiarities which distinguish gold from all other substances, and render it so valuable in the arts. Let us glance at some of them here.

The colour of gold is a brilliant yellow: when the metal is pure, it is nearly the orange-yellow of the solar spectrum. When it contains a little silver, it is pale yellow, or greenish-yellow; and

when alloyed to a little copper, it takes a reddish hue.

We do not always see objects precisely in their natural colours: the white light which falls upon them is composed of the seven tints of the solar spectrum (or rainbow), and when a body reflects yellow light, for instance, it absorbs all the other colours. But this absorption is never complete in a first reflection; so that the light reflected from a metallic surface is mixed to a certain extent with undecomposed white light. In order to see the precise colour of a metal, the light of the sun must be reflected from it to a second surface of the same metal, and from this second piece to a third, and so on, until we obtain a tint which does not change by further reflections. In this experiment the undecomposed white light is all absorbed, and the true colour of the metal is seen. In this manner gold is seen to be of a brilliant orange colour; copper, nearly carmine red; tin, pale yellow; silver, white; lead, blue, &c.

But gold can be beaten out so thin that it allows light to pass through it, in which case, though it still appears brilliant yellow by reflected light, it is green as viewed by transmission, that is, by the light that passes through it. This curious effect can easily be observed by laying a piece of gold-leaf upon a plate of glass, and holding it between the eye and the light, when the gold will appear semi-transparent, and of a peculiar leek-green colour.

We have not yet done with the colour of gold. When this metal is precipitated from its solutions by means of phosphorus dissolved in ether, or by means of chloride of tin or sulphate of iron, it is obtained in a very fine state of division—that is, as the finest possible of powders; and though it is in every case the identical uncombined or pure metal, yet its colour is different according to the substance employed to precipitate it; thus, we can obtain gold of a bright ruby colour, of a blue colour, of a brown colour, and of that peculiar purple colour which it also takes when volatilised by an electric discharge.

Now these facts are interesting to photographers, for here we have a metal which takes no fewer than six perfectly distinct colours, according to the mechanical state of division in which we produce it. It is known that silver possesses to a certain extent the same properties; and some writers are of opinion that here lies the secret of producing naturally-coloured photographs.

Gold is rather softer than silver; therefore, to make gold coin and jewellery wear as well as silver, a small quantity of some other metal is alloyed with it. What is termed 'sterling' or 'standard' gold consists of pure gold alloyed with one-twelfth of either copper or silver. In English coin, a mixture of copper and silver is used to make up this one-twelfth.

The specific gravity of gold is 19.50; that is, it weighs nineteen and a half times as much as its own bulk of water. The ductility and malleability of this metal are equalled by no other. By ductility is meant the property of allowing itself to be drawn out into a wire; and by malleability, its property of flattening without splitting under the hammer. The latter quality serves to distinguish instantly between a piece

of gold and a piece of iron pyrites, for instance : a blow with a hammer will flatten the gold, but will cause the pyrites to fly into a hundred pieces. Indeed, gold may be beaten out into a leaf of such fineness that one grain of the metal may thus be made to cover fifty-six and three-quarter square inches. These leaves are so thin and homogeneous, that they allow light to pass through them, as we have seen, and their thickness has been calculated to be about  $\frac{1}{250000}$ th of an inch. But we can procure gold much thinner than this. If a thick piece of silver be solidly gilt and drawn out, we obtain, spread over the whole wire, a layer of gold which has only one-twelfth part of the thickness just named. One ounce of pure gold may thus be made to extend to a distance of thirteen hundred miles ; that is to say, it would go from London to Mount Hecla, in Iceland, and back again without breaking upon the silver surface. We see, thus, how a little gold may be made to 'go a long way ;' and this is turned to excellent account in electro-gilding, the cheapest of all decorations.

Gold can be drawn out into wires which possess considerable tenacity. A wire only one-twelfth of an inch in diameter will bear a weight of about one hundred and fifty pounds. But that is not so strong as iron, copper, silver, or platinum wire. The ductility of gold, however, is so great that one grain-weight of this metal can be drawn out as a wire to a distance of five hundred feet.

We will not occupy ourselves about the exact degree of temperature at which gold melts, but it is said to lie between twelve hundred and ninety-eight and thirteen hundred degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer. As soon as it is melted it glows with a beautiful yellowish-green phosphorescence. On cooling it contracts more perhaps than any other metal ; this is why it is not fit for casting into moulds, because on cooling it quits the side of the mould and does not reproduce the pattern satisfactorily. In the arts this is obviated by alloying the gold with some metal which contracts less on cooling, such as copper or silver.

It has been proved that the most violent heat of our glass-house furnaces will not cause gold to volatilise, or go off in vapour, though silver and many other metals are vaporised at this high temperature. An ounce of gold was kept for a month in the hottest part of a glass-house furnace, and did not lose weight. However, a still more violent heat will volatilise it : by submitting gold to the heat of a blast-furnace, for instance, the metal may be seen to rise in fumes, which will attach themselves to a plate of silver suspended about five inches above the molten gold, so as to gild it. A moderately strong electric discharge will volatilise gold in the form of a beautiful violet-coloured vapour. In this experiment, if we make use of a gilded silk cord, the electric discharge carries off all the gold, leaving the silk intact. Like all metals, gold is a good conductor of electricity ; but there would be no advantage in using it for telegraphic wires or lightning-conductors, as copper is a much better conductor than gold.

One of the most important properties of the latter metal is its inalterability when kept exposed to the air, to water, or to acid emanations.

Most metals in these circumstances rust or tarnish, but gold remains brilliant. Some persons having remarked that the gold used by dentists for stopping decayed teeth disappeared, more or less, after a time, were led to suppose that the saliva contained some substance which acted upon it ; but though the saliva acts energetically upon many organic substances, and will attack some metals, it has been proved by an eminent chemist that it has no action upon pure gold. The disappearance of gold used for stopping teeth is simply due to wear or friction. In the same manner, rings, chains, and gold coin become thinner by friction. Dishonest people have taken advantage of this property in the process called 'sweating.'

Gold can be united or alloyed to most of the other metals, and some of these alloys have very remarkable properties. The extraordinary ductility and malleability of pure gold, to which we have alluded, are entirely lost when this metal is alloyed with only  $\frac{1}{250000}$ th part of bismuth ; and a similar effect is produced with tin, arsenic, and many other metals. Thus, according to the celebrated chemist Hatchett, if two thousand ounces of gold be melted with one ounce of bismuth, the resulting compound metal, or alloy, instead of hammering out into a thin sheet, will not flatten at all, but breaks to pieces. Mercury combines so readily with the precious metal that, being a liquid metal at ordinary temperatures, it is often used to dissolve gold, and, before electro-gilding superseded it, this liquid alloy or 'amalgam,' as it was called, was extensively used for gilding copper and silver.

Copper unites with gold, renders it harder, and gives it that reddish tinge so remarkable in continental jewellery ; it resists wear much longer than pure gold, such as is used by the natives of India, for instance.

When gold is dissolved in nitro-muriatic acid it forms chloride of gold, a beautiful yellow liquid, used by gilders, photographers, and others. When this solution is diluted with water, and chloride of tin is added, metallic gold is precipitated as a beautiful purple powder, which is used for gilding and colouring porcelain and glass. This powder is called 'purple of Cassius,' from the name of its discoverer, Andreas Cassius, of Leyden, who made it for the first time in the year 1685. In gilding porcelain it is spread upon the pattern by means of a paste, and by the action of heat in the oven it takes the ordinary golden hue and brilliancy ; but by modifying the composition of the paste, it yields also rose and purple colours. When a small quantity of it is mixed with the materials used in making glass, the glass produced has a magnificent ruby tint, seen to perfection in the well-known Bohemian glass.

The art of electro-gilding was discovered in 1803 by Brugnatelli, a pupil of the illustrious Volta ; it not only superseded the old unhealthy method of gilding by mercury, but placed the use of gold within the reach of the poorer classes. The extremely small quantity of gold which can thus be made to cover uniformly a large surface of some other metal to which it adheres firmly, and resists ordinary friction, gives to the gilt object the external appearance and the properties of pure gold.



Gilding on metals and porcelain consumes large amounts of the precious metal. About one thousand ounces of fine gold are used in Birmingham every week; and in the Staffordshire potteries some seven to ten thousand ounces of gold are used per annum. Photographers employ a great deal of this metal in the shape of chloride of gold, or 'sel d'or,' a compound salt used for intensifying or toning the photographic image.

The production of gold-leaf is a very important industry. The product is extensively used for gilding picture-frames, and for other kinds of mechanical gilding, such as that which is applied to the binding of books and the edges of the leaves. Several of the applications to which we have merely alluded would require a special article in order to give an idea of their extent and importance.

It appears from certain passages in the Bible that in remote ages men were well acquainted with the art of purifying gold by heating this metal in contact with the air, much as we do at the present time; but the art of gilding, colouring glass and porcelain, and spinning flattened gold wire, are all appliances of comparatively modern date.

In making what is called gold wire a cylindrical ingot of silver well gilt is drawn successively through a number of small round holes in a steel plate, each hole being less than the other, till the thread is no wider than a hair. This can now be flattened by passing between two small rollers of polished steel, and so fit it to be used in the making of brocades, laces, embroideries, &c. Spun gold is, in fact, flattened gold wire wrapped over a thread of silk by twisting with a wheel and iron bobbins.

Many centuries before coal or iron was known to them, the inhabitants of Scotland were acquainted with gold. They found it in the beds of streams and rivers, and with the aid of stone hammers formed it into rude ornaments for the decoration of their persons. Antiquarian research has brought to light many curious and interesting facts relating to the use of gold in prehistoric times; and numerous ornaments, thus rudely fashioned, are preserved in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh. In the twelfth century, when trade was opened with some of the continental countries, among the first things imported were vessels of gold and silver. In those days the churchmen were the great masters of the useful and ornamental arts, and were so jealous of their skill that they did not wish foreigners to have the sole privilege of supplying plate and jewellery. Accordingly, they turned their attention to working in the precious metals; they became goldsmiths, jewellers, and lapidaries, and after a while they succeeded in making articles that could compete to a certain extent with the artistic work of Italy and Flanders. This is how the art of working in gold and silver began in Scotland, where it afterwards rose to considerable eminence.

Of late years, the manufacture of aluminium bronze, which is copper containing a very small amount of aluminium, has largely taken the place of gold in watchcases, watchchains, pencil-cases, and certain articles of jewellery. But many of the uses to which gold is put cannot be effected by the compound metal just named. There are

other kinds of imitation gold, but they are either far more expensive than aluminium bronze, or not nearly equal to it either in appearance or in quality.

## HENDRIK SWANEPOEL'S PROMISED LAND.

CHAP. VII.—A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE RATIFIED IN COUNCIL—A GOLDEN DOWRY—THE TREK FOR HOME.

As soon as Farquhar Murray was strong enough, he told Gert Swanepoel and his wife of his love for Bina and of his wish to make her his wife. His proposition was received with unfeigned and almost unmixed pleasure. As Gert said in his bluff way, 'No man could wish for a better-looking or a braver son-in-law; a man shrewdly able to handle a gun, manage a horse, or drive a wagon.' But there were some difficulties. First, there had been no 'op-sitting,' without which solemn form no lover in the Settlement had ever previously been known to win his bride. This objection was overcome by Farquhar's obvious explanation that op-sittings were unknown in England, and quite out of his way. He had approached the girl as any Englishman would have done, and that should surely be held sufficient. But further, much as Gert liked the young man, and would wish to see him united to Bina, no daughter of a Swanepoel had ever married an 'uitlander' (foreigner) or quitted the Settlement to return southward to the old Colony; and, Boer-like, he was unwilling to establish so novel and possibly dangerous a precedent. Why, all the marriageable females of the Rust might be carried off some fine day, and then what would become of the settlement?

Long and protracted discussions were held upon these points. At length Farquhar, after repeatedly pointing out the good that would ensue to the little colony by communication with the outer world, prevailed so far that Gert promised to call a Council of the Settlement, by whom the point should be decided. Accordingly, a meeting was called for the next day, when thirty-one males over the age of twenty-one years assembled in the school-house, which served also as a Council Chamber. It was a curious scene. The thirty-one leathern-coated councillors sat facing the little dais upon which Gert, as standing first in descent from Hendrik Swanepoel, presided. Farquhar was placed in a chair at the side of the dais upon Gert's right hand. When all were seated, Gert rose, and in simple yet effective fashion thus spoke:

'Brethren of Swanepoel's Rust, descendants all of Hendrik Swanepoel the voer-trekker, ye are called here to-day to declare your minds upon a great and solemn question, upon a matter that never yet has been mooted, or so much as thought on since the day when first the weary footsteps of our forefather wandered to this valley. A daughter of the Settlement is sought in marriage by the young Englishman ye now see before you, Mynheer Farquhar Murray. But not this only. Mynheer Murray desires to carry back with him to the old Capeland, whence we are all sprung, his wife that is to be. He has many reasons in his favour; these he will



presently lay before you, and then ye will decide whether for the first time one of our number, a daughter of our family, shall go forth from among us to other lands we know not of, save by the name and tradition handed down to us from our forefathers. And albeit it is no light thing to say, yet pondering as I have deeply over this matter, I would fain confess that, loth though I should be to lose a beloved child, loth to break lightly or at random the laws of our community, I see no harm or evil in this proposal. Rather, as I think, good may from it spring. By its means we may gain access to that outer world from which we have been shut off these hundred years. As ye all know, it hath been discussed in Council ere now whether it were not wise to seek communication once more with our kindred of the Capeland for the bettering of our knowledge, the improvement of our minds, and the strengthening of our Settlement. And I would make an end of this my talk—always, as ye know, an irksome matter with me—by reminding you that Hendrik Swanepoel, in the wise laws and directions by him framed and bequeathed for our guidance, nowhere forbids communion with the outer world; nay, rather he would seem to have had within his mind some such thing, as ye may know by the nineteenth law of the Settlement.—Ye will now hear whatsoever Mynheer Farquhar Murray hath to say upon this grave matter, and then by your majority decide, Ay or Nay, shall the young man be permitted to take from this Settlement for his wife the maiden Jacobina Hendrika Swanepoel, eldest daughter of myself, Gert Hendrik Swanepoel?

Farquhar after a slight pause then rose, and the buzz of deep-toned whispers which had run around at the conclusion of Gert's oration at once ceased. In a clear, straightforward, earnest speech, delivered of course in Dutch, he strove by every art and argument within his power to impress upon his hearers the advantages that would accrue to the settlers by intercommunication with the great world. He suggested that one of their young men should be permitted to accompany Bina and himself to the Cape Colony, thereafter to return laden with the innumerable improvements in wagons, weapons, implements, books, and other worldly gear that a hundred years of civilisation had produced. He pointed out that the immense wealth of gold and ivory possessed by the Settlement would procure inestimable advantages for them. All these things, all the wonders and glories of that unknown outer world, portrayed with the greatest fire and imagination that he could throw into his subject, the young man placed before the wondering minds of the simple people before him. As he admitted in his own soul, these things appealed as much to the selfish as to the noble side of their natures, and no doubt, viewed in the abstract, were not altogether likely to prove unmixt blessings to so primitive, so happy and contented a society. But Farquhar was deeply in love; he played for the highest stake a man may win, and he knew that unless he could fire the imaginations and kindle the enthusiasm of these rude farmers, he would never attain his end. He ceased at length, and noted with inward satisfaction that among the younger men his words had created an unmistakable impression.

A primitive debate of an hour or more followed, first one then another of the settlers stepping up to the dais and speaking. The father of the Settlement, Carel Johannes Swanepoel, a bent white-bearded tottering old man, stood forth, and leaning on his staff feebly protested against the monstrous proposal that was laid before them. Was it for this that a hundred years of toil and pleasure, of storm and sunshine, of battle and danger, had passed over their heads, that the Settlement, now peaceful and happy, was to be invaded by new men and dangerous ideas? For his part, and he spoke as the last remaining member of the community who knew and remembered their forefather Hendrik, he warned them all solemnly and with his dying voice against this proposal. 'Allemagtig!' No good, but evil, would come of it. They wanted no outlanders over-running their country and robbing them of their lands. Finally, the aged conservative sank into his seat exhausted and indignant.

At length all had finished, and the hands were counted. First: For the marriage of Bina Swanepoel with Farquhar, and for her departure from the Settlement! Amid anxious excited looks from all, twenty-three hands went up in favour. Against the proposal eight hands were raised. Second: For permission for one male of the Settlement to proceed to the Cape Colony with Murray and Bina, on condition of returning within two years! The same number of hands in favour, the same number of nalccontents. The matter was therefore decided in favour of Farquhar by a majority of fifteen.

After heartily thanking the Council for its consent, and amid much boisterous congratulation and good-humoured laughter, Farquhar quitted the meeting, and hastened up to the house to acquaint Bina with the result. When Gert came in afterwards, it was decided that, as he and his wife were very loth to part from their child, the departure should not take place for fourteen days, and meantime the marriage ceremony should be arranged.

Now, this was a matter of serious difficulty with Farquhar. Looking at the thing in an honest and straightforward light, he had decided in his inmost heart that he could not be lawfully bound to Bina in wedlock except by a marriage in Cape Colony solemnised by a duly-qualified clergyman. It was a delicate matter to explain to Bina, but it must be done. The next day, as Gert sat smoking on the terrace after breakfast, he informed Farquhar that he desired to provide Bina with such a portion as would befit her for the station of her husband and her entry into the civilised world. After Farquhar had left the Council yesterday, he had obtained the unanimous consent of all the members that as much gold as could conveniently be carried in the Englishman's wagon should be placed at the disposal of the departing couple. Gold was to be had in any quantity, and they had no use for it except to convert it into plates and table-gear. Further, Gert had made up his mind, after much consideration, that his second son, Jan, a lad of nineteen, should accompany them to the Cape, provided with sufficient gold to bring back three or four good new wagons and a supply of implements, guns, utensils, cutlery, clothing, and books, all of the most modern style and to be approved and chosen

by Farquhar. Provided with these, after a stay of a few months with Farquhar, the young man was to find his way back to the Settlement.

For the magnificent dowry thus proffered the Englishman thanked Gert very heartily, although as he said he was already really sufficiently well off. The second proposition fell in exactly with his own views, and would tend to smooth his marriage difficulty very considerably. The legal validity of any form of marriage celebrated in the Settlement he looked upon with doubt, and he had fully made up his mind that his future wife could not and should not be claimed as his own until they had reached the Cape. The announcement that Jan would travel down with Bina and himself at once removed a mighty load from his mind. Jan would act capably as a chaperon for his sister. Once they had quitted the Rust, Farquhar would explain his scruples to his brother-in-law, and while Bina occupied the wagon, Jan and himself would share the tent at night. All this he now fully explained to Bina, who thoroughly agreed with him. Meanwhile it was arranged that the next day should be devoted to getting as much gold as in Farquhar's opinion could conveniently be taken with them. Bina bargained on accompanying the expedition, laughingly pointing out that it was only fair she should assist in picking up her own dowry.

At daybreak on the following morning, therefore, a large party set out for the mountains about seven miles distant, where the river took its source, and where the main deposits of gold were to be found. It was a merry cavalcade, provided with such spades and picks as the settlement possessed, fashioned for the most part of hardwood. Farquhar had determined if possible to keep the knowledge of the gold region from his own servants, fearing lest, on reaching the Colony, they might induce some avaricious and probably unprincipled speculators to undertake the journey and invade the Settlement. His followers were therefore sent into the valley for the day, and then taking with them a number of Bakotwa as helpers, and Farquhar himself driving the wagon, having inspanned the oxen, they proceeded. A detour of some distance brought them, after skirting the outer base of the mountains that shut in the valley, to the foot of a neighbouring and higher range. Here they entered a kloof through which ran the main stream of the Blyde River, now greatly narrowed. Several minor streamlets flowing from the mountains had to be crossed, and at length, as the torrent became lessened and the ascent more laborious, the wagon was halted, and the oxen outspanned. A search keenly instituted in the shallow sandy stream bed presently brought to light several good-sized lumps of gold, some mingled with quartz, others almost pure pieces of metal, much rounded by the action of storm-torrents, and sometimes coated with reddish-brown rusty-looking earth.

The rapid discovery of these nuggets at once opened Farquhar's eyes to the enormous value of the auriferous deposits contained within this mighty pile of mountain. A careful and regulated hunt was now conducted, not only up the bed of the clear shallow stream itself, but in every part of the bottom of the ravine, which

narrowed as it trended upwards. A glance at the surroundings told the Englishman how this mass of treasure had been laid bare. Apparently some bygone convulsion of Nature in the dim and remote ages had split asunder the mountain at this place. Masses of quartz mingled with gold had then and from time to time, as centuries passed by, fallen from the cliff walls and rolled downwards. The tiny stream of water, at first trickling down the cleft thus formed, afterwards, as its bed became washed deeper and deeper, gathering in volume and rushing headlong to the valley beneath, and the rain-storms washing year by year upon the precipices, had disintegrated and swept down the precious metal, cleansing and rounding it century by century as it rolled. And thus had been prepared for the hand of man these lumps and nuggets to-day so assiduously sought after. It was a curious and striking quest that for the dowry of old Hendrik Swanepoel's great-great-grand-daughter.

As the day wore on, the little cairn of gold formed down at the wagon grew rapidly. Lumps weighing from a few ounces to masses of four and five hundred ounces were discovered, and often with some difficulty carried down. Only pure or almost pure nuggets were selected, many rich pieces imbedded in quartz being rejected. The heaviest nugget, as Farquhar afterwards ascertained upon having it weighed at the bank in Grahamstown, sealed just over six hundred ounces, and was sold for two thousand one hundred pounds. In all, the pile of gold gathered that day sealed out some eight thousand ounces of pure ore, and brought Bina and her husband a fortune in hard sovereigns of thirty-two thousand pounds.

Farquhar was not of an avaricious or exorbitant nature. If he had been otherwise and had chosen to have remained a week or two in this kloof, as he might easily have done, he would most certainly have carried away without difficulty a huge fortune. As it was, only a mile or two of ground was explored, and the fabulous riches of that ravine were scarcely disturbed.

At four o'clock the gold-seekers were re-assembled at the wagon, and then the chests which had been emptied for the purpose were filled, fastened up with strong 'reims' of koodoo hide, and placed at the top end of the wagon. Then quitting the shadow of the towering peak that stood sentinel over one of the richest gold-deposits in the world, just as its tall cone blushed in the hot red glow of African evening, the merry party hid them homewards for their valley. On reaching Farquhar's camp the treasure-boxes were first covered over with skins, and afterwards the finest of the elephant tusks were piled over and around them. Mindful of his future wife's comfort, he had determined to sacrifice the bulk of his ivory, with which the wagon was nearly filled, so that plenty of space was now available for Bina's quarters, on the long journey that lay before them. Having thus carefully concealed the gold from the prying eyes of his men, Farquhar rode back to the Rust, and despatched two of his followers to look after the camp.

At length all preparations were completed, the last fortnight was ended, and Bina's modest trousseau prepared. The girl had provided her-

self from the home-spun materials long since woven by herself and her mother, and now fashioned, under Farquhar's laughing and somewhat bewildered guidance, costumes that should on her entry into civilisation more accord with modern usages than her every-day huntress dress. The preliminary leave-takings were now made, and the day came when the marriage ceremony and their departure were to take place. The wedding—preliminary only in Farquhar's and Bina's eyes—was safely and decorously got through, and then, with tearful parting from Bina's own dearly-loved family, the two rode off amid the cheers and hearty good-wishes of the whole settlement, drawn out in array, accompanied by Jan, and escorted by a number of the male settlers as far as Farquhar's camp.

Before Bina quitted the beautiful valley and issued from the gateway, she drew rein just upon the spot where Farquhar had first set eyes upon Swanepoel's Rust, to look once more upon her old home. For the last time she gazed with swimming eyes over the dear and well-remembered scene. The great wall of environing mountain wherein the peaceful vale lay lapped; the sweet and silvery river flowing peacefully through the vernal pastures; the golden patches of the corn-lands; the white-walled homesteads, the bosky timber, and the flocks and herds dotted here and there about the landscape—all these things were imperishably printed in the memories of herself and her husband. Then the wagon was got under weigh, and the last farewells said to the troop of farmers who had ridden out with them for a few miles from the Settlement. Finally, when the mountains lay like blue clouds upon the horizon as they viewed them just before sunset of the next day, they bade a long and regretful farewell to Swanepoel's Rust. But before this time Bina had dried her tears, and in the society of Farquhar now looked forward to many a thousand happy days to come.

Of the long and adventurous eight months' trek before the three wayfarers and their followers reached Cape Colony time and space forbid to tell. Bina employed the long days and evenings profitably in learning English, and proceeding with other subjects; for Farquhar had a supply of books with him, and by the time Great Namaqualand was passed, she could read and speak the language almost perfectly. At length the Orange River was crossed, and the Colonial boundary reached. Finally, Graaf Reinet was gained, and in that charming old-fashioned Dutch town, well named 'the gem of the desert,' Farquhar and Bina were made one, Jan giving his sister away. After a fortnight's delightful rest in Graaf Reinet, they proceeded to Grahamstown, and at last arrived at Farquhar's own farm, Wolve-fontein. Farquhar was greeted by all his numberless friends as one risen from the dead, and his beautiful wife and her origin—which latter, for reasons connected with the Swanepoel settlers, has never been exactly revealed—were long the theme of praise and conversation and criticism in Albany circles.

As for the adventurous expedition of Farquhar, his wife, and Jan back to Swanepoel's Rust, undertaken a year later through Mosmedede and the Amboella countries, the perils they passed through, the battles that they waged with men and beasts before reaching the Settlement; the attack subse-

quently made upon the Rust by a gang of free-booters, who, through Andries the Hottentot, had heard of the store of gold to be found in that region, and of their subsequent and final return to the old Colony, these things are graven in the hearts of Farquhar and his wife and of the Swanepoel settlers.

It is many years ago, but Farquhar Murray has never forgotten the day on which he first set eyes on his wife in the far African wilderness. Nor, on her part, surrounded as she is by a handsome loving family, has Bina abated one whit in the love and admiration for her husband that then sprang within her breast. Untiring diligence, an excellent governess at their home after their second return to Grahamstown, and a year's trip to England, completed Bina's education; and sometimes now Farquhar laughingly laments the peerless Diana, as she appeared when first he happened upon her in the forest, and declares that he never would have married her if he had thought she could have so changed her nature and her attire amid the comparative refinements and amenities of a Colonial existence.

THE END.

## THE MONTH:

### SCIENCE AND ARTS.

SCHEMES for the exploration of the unknown region around the South Pole have been brought forward several times since Sir James Ross, half a century ago, conducted an expedition there in the two wooden ships *Erebus* and *Terror*. This expedition, brought about at the suggestion of the British Association, and backed by a parliamentary grant, was as successful as could have been expected. Two huge volcanoes, rising from what was assumed to be land belonging to a vast Antarctic Continent, were discovered, and had conferred upon them the names of the two ships just cited. The Magnetic Pole was, it was estimated, approached within one hundred and fifty miles, and many observations of a valuable character were noted. It has long been pointed out that, with the aid of steam-power, much grander results may be achieved, and a fresh exploration scheme was brought before the British Association by Admiral Ommaney in 1885. With the energetic co-operation of Baron Nordenskiöld, the Australians are now contemplating an Antarctic expedition which is to start in the autumn of next year; and its fortunes will be followed with intense interest by all those who feel within them that spirit of adventure which seems to be the birthright of English-speaking nations.

A curious and interesting discovery was made in the Crimea last summer during some archaeological explorations there; this consisted in the unearthing of several skeletons, the bones of which had been painted. Professor Grempler, of Breslau, believes that these skeletons are the remains of the original inhabitants of the country, the Cimmericians of Herodotus, whose custom it was, like the Persians in their 'Towers of Silence,' to expose their dead in high places so that birds might consume the flesh. The skeletons, when thus cleaned and bleached by exposure to the air and sun, were then treated with mineral pigments. Similar graves have been found in



Central Asia, but they are of rare occurrence. It is the intention of the Professor named to exhibit these curious relics of a past method of burial at the Anthropological Congress to be held at Paris.

Mr J. L. Cloudsley of Westminster has invented a Gas Valve Indicator, which can be attached to the front of a meter to show the exact cost of the gas consumed. It consists of a cardboard dial with a pointer, round the edge of which are figures representing hundreds of cubic feet of gas. Against each figure is given the equivalent cost at a stated price per thousand, so that if the current price should vary, as it constantly does, the dial would have to be replaced by a new one. Setting aside this disadvantage, the little contrivance will be valued by those who like to see at a glance the state of their account with the gas company, a feat which is only possible to a few under existing conditions. The pointer receives its motion from the ordinary indicator of the meter, and each completed thousand is marked by another pointer on a second dial which rests centrally within the major one.

Those who are acquainted with the chronic state of semi-starvation to which a large residuum of our town populations is unfortunately subject, must have often felt a heart-pang when they have read each month that so many hundred tons of fish had been seized and condemned in our principal markets as unfit for human food. This waste goes on year after year, and no one seems to move a finger to stop it, for what is everybody's business is nobody's business. Mr J. L. Hamilton, M.R.C.S., of Brighton, has more than once pointed out that fresh fish can be made into an almost imperishable food by taking certain simple precautions, and he once more advocates a trial of his system. It consists in bleeding the fish before the blood has clotted, gutting and cleaning it with an abundance of sea-water, and transferring it at once to refrigerating chambers, or dry-air stores, as in the frozen-meat trade. Where a cold chamber is out of the question, peat-moss litter, he says, will preserve the cleaned fish fairly well. Unless some philanthropist is inclined to try this very hopeful method of meeting a crying evil, we fear that nothing will be done, unless indeed it should prove to be advantageous to the interests of those who rule the markets.

We have heard a great deal lately about the abuse of newly-discovered drugs which in America especially, and by means of the hypodermic syringe, are injected under the skin to give an artificial stimulant to the nerves. The habit grows upon its victims, like alcoholism, and the dose has to be constantly increased to attain the desired result. But the latest reported application of the syringe is of a still more degrading character, for it aims only at giving an improved appearance to the complexion. The 'hypodermic blush,' as it is called, is attained by discharging a small amount of colouring matter beneath the skin of the cheeks. The effect is immediate, and the blush, we are told, 'lasts two hours.' We are glad to learn, however, that the patient soon after exhibits a greenish-yellow complexion, which is not beautiful, and that the syringe cannot be used without leaving an ugly little scar upon the flesh.

An American paper lately published an interesting list of small inventions which have brought

large sums of money to the patentees, a result which is not so much due to American ingenuity, perhaps, as to their admirable patent law, which is designed to encourage invention, rather than, as is the case in this country, to tax it to the utmost. Among the inventions cited are mentioned those malleable iron shoe-plates and tips which find an enormous sale, and which have brought their contriver royalties amounting to a quarter of a million sterling. Roller skates have also brought their patentee a goodly sum; while the happy idea of sticking emery powder on cloth has proved most profitable. Toys which have won popularity with the young folks have brought small fortunes to their contrivers, and among them may be specially mentioned the simple device of a wooden ball with an attached elastic thread which causes it to return to the hand. 'Pharaoh's Serpent' was the fanciful name given to a chemical compound which when burnt makes an enormous quantity of ash of a spiral form. This little device had a great run a few years back, and brought money to its originator. The Chameleon Top is also a very profitable toy. It would appear that the simplest devices, provided that they meet the wants of a large number, bring far more money to an inventor than one which may perhaps mark an epoch in the world's industries and cost its originator a life's work.

The *Electrician* tells of a new application of the electric current in glass factories. When a sheet of window-glass is made it is blown into a cylindrical shape in the first instance; and the cylinder, before being cut down longitudinally, and allowed to unbend on a flat surface, so as to form the sheet, has its ends cut off. This was formerly done by wrapping round the part to be cut a piece of white-hot glass fresh from the melting-pot. By the new plan the separation is made far more neatly by placing round the glass a thin wire, and afterwards causing an electric current to traverse that wire. The metal becomes red hot, is removed, and a drop of cold water applied to the heated surface, with the result that it cracks all round where the wire has touched it. A ready plan for cutting off the bottom of bottles has long been in vogue, which consists in tying round the part where the separation is to be made a piece of string soaked in spirit. This is afterwards ignited, and a drop of water applied, as in the case just described.

It seems strange that the Chinese, who have been so forward with many important industrial applications, should be behindhand in the matter of coinage. Hitherto, China has had no silver coinage, but has depended on Mexican and Japanese dollars mainly, as well as upon some which were issued by the old Hong-kong Mint. In the country districts, silver was taken by weight and fineness in lieu of coins, and was carried about in small blocks called 'shoes.' When a purchase was made, a bit of the metal of the required weight was chipped off the block with a hammer and chisel. But at last, by imperial proclamation, a first silver coinage has been issued. This document warns the people that the new coins are to be taken at their standard value, that the price is not to be lowered, and that they are not to be rejected as strange. It also points out that the new coins are like foreign dollars, except



that there is a curling dragon, outside of which characters are embossed. On front, are the words 'Current coin of Kwang-hsu' and 'Minted at Canton.'

Forty years ago, the experiment with a pendulum by which Foucault sought to make the rotation of the earth sensible to the eye, made a great and popular sensation. The experiment, first conducted in the cellar of a house at Paris, was repeated before crowds of onlookers at the Pantheon. A few weeks later, the same experiment was carried out on a far larger scale at the then famous Polytechnic in London, the pendulum consisting of a wire forty-five feet long, furnished with a bob of twenty-eight pounds, while it swung across a divided circle sixteen feet in diameter. Once more, we understand, the old experiment is to be repeated in the city where it originated. The place of experiment will be the Eiffel Tower at Paris, and the pendulum will be suspended from the centre of the second platform. This pendulum will comprise a bronze wire nearly four hundred feet long, with a steel ball attached weighing two hundred pounds. The advantage to be gained by repeating Foucault's experiment upon this immense scale is not apparent. Such a pendulum will undoubtedly keep up its motion for an extended time, but unless air-currents are carefully provided against, the results will be greatly interfered with.

Powdered steel, made by suddenly quenching in cold water steel which has been brought to a very high temperature, and afterwards reducing the metal in a stamping-mill, is said to be better and cheaper for many polishing purposes than emery. The quenching operation renders the metal not only very hard, but exceedingly brittle, so that it is quite possible to pulverise it. It is carefully sifted to different grades of fineness before use.

In Cumberland, north of the Duddon Estuary, there has been worked for the past twenty years a valuable mine of hematite iron, a form of ore which is of particular value for admixture with certain kinds of steel. The mine has been worked as close to the sea as was practicable without running a risk of flooding the workings; and the proprietors were at length induced to seek a fresh concession from the landowner, to enable them to win the ore from underneath the sea-bed. This necessitated the building of a vast wall or barrier to keep the sea at bay, and this difficult undertaking has just been successfully completed. The wall is two-thirds of a mile in length; and is fifty feet high from foundation to parapet. As it is exposed to the full fury of south-westerly gales and Atlantic rollers, the work has had to be carried out in a very solid and substantial manner. It is hoped that its erection will permit the working of the mine for twenty-five years, a matter of great importance to the district, seeing that fifteen hundred men find employment there.

Dr C. W. Jones, of Bowdon, Cheshire, has invented a 'Therapeutic' Smoking Pipe, with which the pleasant weed may be indulged in without any fear of nicotine finding its way to the system. The pipe can also be used for the inhalation of volatile medicaments in certain cases, when such administration is desirable.

The pipe is of somewhat complicated construction, and comprises different chambers, in which the smoke is robbed of its noxious ingredients as well as cooled in its passage towards the mouth. It possesses several advantageous features which should commend it to smokers who are careful of their health.

According to the *Kew Bulletin*, the pine forests of Bavaria are being attacked by a terrible pest known as the *Nonnen*, which is the caterpillar of a certain moth (*Liparis Monarcha*), which at intervals has infested continental forests for a couple of centuries back. The loss which will accrue to the state forest revenue next year is expected to reach the sum of forty thousand pounds. Birds, as well as wasps and other insects, prey upon the creatures; but the most formidable destroyer is in the shape of an 'exhauster' associated with a brilliant electric light. The light attracts the creatures to its proximity, where there is a huge funnel, through which a strong exhaust current of air is forced, sucking them into an aperture below ground, where they remain buried. It is said that a similar pest appeared in 1853 in East Prussia; but a storm drove the moths into the sea, from which they were subsequently thrown up in the form of a huge bank several miles in length.

What promises to be a most important industry has been established at Swansea; this is a new process for the manufacture of seamless tubes from blocks of solid metal, and is named after its inventors, two brothers, the Mannesmann Process. The method will meet with its widest applications in the treatment of steel, and the metal selected must be of the very finest quality. Red-hot bars of the metal are passed between conical rolls of peculiar construction, and they pass out at the other side in the form of seamless tubes. A peculiar feature of the process is that in these tubes the fibre of the metal, instead of being parallel, is twisted round in a spiral, thus giving immense strength to the product. Great power is requisite to produce this result, and this is achieved by the employment of a fly-wheel, which weighs sixty tons, and which stores up about ten thousand horse-power. Tubes of any thickness or diameter can be produced by a change in the position of the conical rolls. The new process will have many applications in different departments of steel manufacture, among which may be noted hollow rails and tubes for bridge construction of large span. The works are in the hands of an English company, and have lately been visited by representatives from the Admiralty, Board of Trade, Lloyd's, and other public bodies.

A new process of etching glass has recently been patented in this country by Messrs Meth and Kreitner of Berlin. It may be briefly described as a stamping process by means of india-rubber dies. These dies or stamps are charged with a specially compounded etching fluid, of which hydrofluoric acid naturally forms a part, and the design is impressed upon the glass by them, the fluid eating its way into the surface of the bottle, lamp shade, or other article so treated.

Mr Ernest Hart has lately delivered an address which is full of melancholy interest in pointing to a new form of intoxication which has gradually become common in Ireland. From this paper it

seems certain that ether-drinking has assumed in the sister island alarming proportions. It would seem that the noxious habit prevails chiefly in the southern part of the county of Londonderry. The liquid is mostly supplied from England, and is smuggled as drugs; for if it were openly sent as ether, an extra carriage-rate would be charged on account of the explosive nature of the fluid. The intoxication produced by this compound differs from that which is produced by alcohol, in that the effects pass off so rapidly that the person affected can get drunk half-a-dozen times in one day. The effects of this intoxicant are violent excitement, pugnacity, and loss of self-control; so that the victim to this new form of vice is exposed to accident as well as great danger from the inflammable nature of the fluid indulged in. The public will echo Mr Ernest Hart's sentiment, 'that it is necessary that the legislature should take some step to put down this pernicious ether habit by restricting the sale of the drug to its legitimate uses.'

The frequent accidents from the use of petroleum or paraffin lamps have caused a number of safety devices to be introduced, some of which we have already noticed in these columns. Messrs S. Smith & Co., of Compton Street, London, E.C., have forwarded to us specimens of a new form of burner which they have just introduced under the name of the 'Postlethwaite Automatic Extinguisher,' which appears to fulfil its purpose admirably. This burner is furnished with the usual dome with a slot across, for the accommodation of the flat wick, common to paraffin lamps. But this dome differs from those in ordinary use in not being a fixture, but in being perfectly loose, and made of cast-iron. Its weight acts upon springs below, which open a pair of shutters just above the wick; but should the lamp be overturned, the dome immediately falls off, releasing the springs below, and the shutters close above the wick and at once extinguish the flame. It will be seen that this form of burner has the merit of simplicity, and that there are no complicated parts to get out of order.

#### A NEAPOLITAN ISLAND.

Most people enter Baia by the high-road from Naples. Confessedly, this is the more convenient, as well as the more sentimental method. You are ever by the shore of the Neapolitan sea, treading the very ground the great (but not always good) ancients trod, and passing the ruins of their country-houses. For my part, however, I walked into the village from Cumæ—that bare hill by the western sea, which was once a city. This approach is somewhat eccentric. A ridge of upland runs parallel with the coast along the peninsula, in a corner of which Baia nestles; and the Romans clove the ridge in twain, that their transports might not suffer by the tiresome ascents and descents. The road therefore goes in a defile, the white sides of the tufa on either hand blinding the eyes when the sun is bright. But the bay soon comes as a relief; Pozzuoli is visible on the other side of it; fragments of baths and temples and other buildings of the Augustan age

face one at every step. It is evidently a neighbourhood mightily classical.

But in spite of its strong reputation, Baia is not very genial towards the wayfarer. By the time I had reached it, the sun was near setting, and I longed for the repose of an inn. Baia, however, was not for such as I. The proprietor of one hotel explained that he existed solely to provide luxurious repasts for the Luculli and Heligabali of the nineteenth century. These aristocratic gourmands were content to eat in his house, with the sea-scape of the bay before their eyes, from as fair a terrace and bower of orange trees as ever distracted a man from his cares. Having dined, they returned to Pozzuoli by moonlight, or even to Naples, if the wind was fair and in the right quarter. And at the second hotel they told a like tale, more curtly. Not even a bribe could make them set up a bed in the house for a single night. They were very emperors of innkeepers, and held their heads serenely high.

Anon I was received in a humble cottage on a cape of land that jutted towards the sea. Something seducingly like a bed was laid athwart six chairs in the corner of a room; and two or three blankets, populous with fleas, completed the necessary arrangements. I should hardly have credited a friend who had bragged of fleas as, on the morrow of this restless night, I felt empowered to discourse upon them. Still, it was Baia. Not every one in this age may sleep in Baia. It was well, therefore, that the experience should write itself up in red letters, even though of irritation. It was a pitchy-dark evening before bedtime, and in my post-prandial gropings outside, with a cigar, I all but walked plump into the sea from an ancient pier. In the shells of the temples and baths which stood up grimly in the gloom, all the traditions of romance rendered it extremely probable that at such a time one might have met innumerable most interesting ghosts.

The dawnlight was of clear gold all over the bay, and upon the mean huts of Baia, and its castle high above it, when I started the next day to walk to the ferry of Miniscola, for the island of Procida. I have never seen a fairer morning. The vines were beaded with dew, which had not yet fled before the sun in the blue heavens. The road was lively with peasants in their national dress, going to and fro with asses and mules, and much song. And there was a glow of colour upon the reddish and purple earth of the gardens and vineyards which would have sent the blood of an artist in ecstatic motion through his veins.

With me went an old fisherman of Baia, whom in desperation I had bidden do just what it pleased him to do. He had worried me for an hour the previous evening to take him and his boat to Procida. I had refused. And lo! when at five o'clock I abandoned my tiresome bed, there stood the graybeard outside, awaiting me, and fully determined not to leave me till some of my silver had passed to him. I told him that I walked fast, hoping thus to deter him. 'Saint Anne and the Madonna,' said he, 'will give me

the needful strength to walk fast also.' The ancient encumbrance was nigh fourscore, yet he never left me—in spite of my periodical protestations that I knew the road as well as himself—until I was behind a door in the hotel of Procida. Even then I heard him declaiming to himself after this style: 'To think that I should have come so far from my home, and all for but three francs—a poor old man like me!' But no sooner did he realise that I was deaf to his self-commissions than he went smartly away, and returned to the mainland, as happy, no doubt, as two days' pay for no work could make him. He was not wholly an unpleasing old creature, though much in the way, and his confidences had even something of unconscious pathos about them. As, for example, when he told me of his domestic vicissitudes: 'Twelve children have I had, of whom eight rest in Paradise, and four find their living among the vines.'

No wonder the old Romans, with a craving for the intenser pleasures of life, built them villas in this radiant neighbourhood. I declare it is impossible to convey an idea of the exhilaration and beauty of the villages between Baia and the Cape. They are all upland, with winding paths leading down to the sea at their base. And from amid their profuse vegetation of beans, peas, and flax, as well as the haughtier orange tree and camellia, what indescribable views of Vesuvius to the east, with its light vapour pendent in the air, shaped like a waterspout, and of dim mountain shapes from the isle of Ischia on the other side! Capri, too, lifted its rocky head above the clouds of morning mist which lay in opaque innocence of evil intention from horizon to horizon, out at sea. The fronds of the palms which beautify the villas of the Neapolitan plutocrats who nowadays inhabit this captivating ridge hardly fluttered in the still sweet air.

Thus we come, towards seven o'clock, to the dead sea or lagoon of Miniscola. The popping of guns here and there tells of the quail-hunters at work. The shores of the dead sea are marked at intervals with little white houses, in which the sportsman may find accommodation for himself, his dog, and his gun. This seaboard was of old the Champs Elysées of dead Greeks and Romans. The tombs still stand cheek by jowl with the infrequent houses. But of course they are now void of occupants. My old companion recounts with envy and unction of the exhuming of sundry of these long-buried ancients: how the skeletons that were once rich men held a valuable gold piece between their dead teeth, and those of the poor only a copper coin worth three-halfpence, and how these gold coins sell to strangers at an excellent price. Charon has forgotten to anticipate these robbers of his dead: one could almost think it a pity. In truth, however, the Champs-Elysées are a most cheerful place of sepulchre. With the sun on the water of the stagnant sea and on the sails of the fishers' boats in the sparkling Mediterranean beyond, there is a picture to win the hearts of others besides the painters and 'hunters' who love these shores.

The sand by the sea, where a long tongue of a peninsula separates the dead from the living waters, is jet black, significant of its volcanic origin. A few yards seawards there is further a pinnacle of lava which tells its story. But the

subterranean ravager must have been curbed here a long time ago, centuries ere the Champs Elysées were established.

We tarry, and wander awhile by the beach, and under the lee of the steep tufa cliffs to the west, in search of a boat to take us across the channel to Procida, which looks enchanting from our standpoint. Happily, it is too early in the day for the sea to be ruffled. We may thus hope to make a brisk passage. Later, a cross-wind is wont to disturb the water in the strait, and though the distance is but two miles, when this is so one may spend an hour or two, or perhaps half a day, in conflict with the current.

At length the ferry-boat appears from the other side. One by one, expectant passengers drop from points of the adjacent cliffs that seem inaccessible and prolific of nothing but marl and boulders. We soon muster a boatful; and when all is ready, the modern Charon of the Champs Elysées—a swart giant with cunning eyes—seizes his prey, one at a time, in his arms, and carries them through the surf to his boat, poised with difficulty on the crest of each wave which here breaks from the long swell of over the way. He is but a careless Charon, however, for he looses one of his victims leg first into the sea, and the others he casts upon the boards of his barque as if they were mere bales of merchandise.

Gradually the isle of Procida, with its vineyards and white houses, comes within readier vision. It is as pretty and compact a little property as a man could wish to possess. In length it is hardly more than two miles, with an indented shore, and, towards Ischia, an engaging pocket gulf called Chiajolella. Its breadth averages a mile. The one town of the island, also called Procida, straggles vaguely all over its surface. One is never out of sight of houses. They lift their white walls by the side of the paved roadways, which also are multitudinous; and would be quite wearisome to the eyes were their colour and that of the walls unrelieved by the varied green of orange and almond trees, pines, aloes, and fig-trees, which contest with the vineyards the soil of this fertile but all too limited little spot. It is one of the most balmy of islands. No matter in what quarter the wind may be, there is always a perfume. And of course it is in a part of the world where winter is not a word for snow and chill winds; and there is nothing in the nature of a factory here to match odour against odour.

Released from my hoary incubus of Baia, I roamed about Procida for a few hours. The thoroughfares climb from the Marina by dark and unpleasant alleys, which brighten, however, when the upper level of the isle is attained. Then they disperse, like the capillaries of the arterial system. You may go north, south, east, or west, at your pleasure, and be in no fear of straying irrecoverably. For my part, like a timid sheep, I followed the sound of one bell after another—ringing the islanders to mass, for it was a festival—until I had seen a score of churches, and was hopelessly at discord with the compass. It was then necessary only to strike for the shore, when the landmark of Ischia to the west, or Vesuvius to the east, was a sure indication of the direction of the Marina.

There are people who find this placid little



island contenting for a week. They must be of the class who, like the spider, carry their resources within themselves. The ordinary person, unless he come professedly to be nourished on its air, will weary of it in a day. It grows fair wine, of which, however, you cannot drink much without feelings of remorse. It has a clean hotel on the Marina. You ascend to it by a number of steep stone steps, at the top of which the cook and the landlord receive you with a generous welcome, and usher you into a suite of rooms containing a multitude of pictures of the Virgin, and several large statues of saints and waxen biblical groupings under glass cases. The landlord is a mild old man, who prattles about religious services and macaroni with equal interest, and who would be astounded to hear that his birthplace has provided so famous a hero of the world as him we call John of Procida. The inn has balconies full of flowers and a terrace on the roof; and from both, one may look across the blue strait at the Champs Elysées and Vesuvius, and dream day-dreams from morn to eve.

There could be no cheaper place of residence for a housekeeper troubled by the fear of bills than this same little island. House-rent is a trifle. Vegetables of twenty kinds grow almost without encouragement. Fruit is tendered to the stranger as a free gift—something no more fit to be appraised at francs and cents than the hips and haws of our own hedges. A lamb costs but half a crown. Fish may be had for the catching. There is abundance of wine, and an unlimited supply of fresh air.

In contempt of the heat, in the afternoon, I wandered up the rough slope that attaches the town of Procida to the castle rock at its south-western corner. The cobbled road was destitute of people. The wise Procidians were sitting in the cool dark shade of their basement rooms, content to view the glare of the sunshine at a distance. I could see them playing cards among the barrels of wine in these apartments, furnishing many a picture for such artists as love plenty of gloom and romantic detail.

Like so many other of the massive old relics of the kind in Italy, the castle of Procida is now a barrack. It is, however, but half a barrack; the other half is used as a house of detention. There could be no surer prison for the convicts. The seaward walls of the pile are vertical with the cliffs; and from the castle windows one may look down several hundred feet of brown rock, thick with varied grasses and plants, at the eddy of white foam where the blue water chafes against the island base.

Hard by the castle is a decaying monastery, built, like it, on the edge of a precipice. Up and down its damp ruined corridors I walked in solitude, listening to the echo of my own steps. It was sweetly cool here after the white sunlight upon the outer stones. The wooden doors that let upon the corridor were corrugated by the havoc of worms, and the destructive action of the salt sea-breezes. There were names on the doors: Brothers Raphael, Gabriel, Savonarola, and the like. But the cards were antique and grimy, and might have been nailed upon the wood a century ago. There was no sound in the place to-day. I called and stamped my feet, but response there was none. Either the monks

had all gone to their long home, or they were enjoying most profound siesta. And so I left the building, and I know not to this day whether it is an inhabited or a deserted establishment.

From the castle and the monastery I went elsewhere; and so from point to point until I had circumvented the island. Ere the steamer for Ischia was at anchor off the stumpy pier by the white church of the Marina, it seemed to me that I had gossiped in every part of Procida. To be companionable, I had drunk wine with all sorts and conditions of people: old dames and young girls, grandsires and their grandsons; in mean little houses by the roadside; and in spacious overground cellars in the midst of the vineyards of the rich *proprietary*, whence he obtained his wine. Everywhere there was sunlight and a soil teeming with fertility, everywhere bright eyes and a glad-some freedom of speech. Some complained of poverty; yet, while they complained, they stood in the middle of their well-stocked gardens, and confessed they never lacked the common needs of life. But one and all declared their love for their little island home: the seductions of the mainland were as nothing to them; they hoped to die as they had lived, in Procida.

#### DEATH AT THE END.

WOULD I were dead and lying in my grave,  
At rest from fretting doubts and carking cares.  
Be kind, oh Heaven, and listen to my prayers;  
Grant me the only favour that I crave—  
Six feet by three of earth to hide my dust:  
I ask no tombstone or memorial bust;  
I ask for death; what is beyond I'll brave.

Little of good or evil have I wrought;  
No happiness or pleasure have I known  
But it hath been with sorrow interwoven;  
All hath elipt from my grasp that I most sought.  
My life, though short in years, is long in grief;  
Night follows day, but brings me no relief,  
And passing years have only sorrow brought.

There is one goal to which our courses tend;  
The way lies over mountains, torrents, plains,  
Through velvet pastures and quiet country lanes:  
To some the pleasant scenes enjoyment lend,  
While others weary toil up rocky slopes  
Dejectedly, and almost void of hopes.  
But one fate waits for all—Death at the End.

#### \* \* \* TO CONTRIBUTORS.

- 1st. All communications should be addressed to the 'Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'
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